

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 15, 21 and 22, and cancel Claim 3:

1. (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus comprising:

a DC-voltage generation circuit for generating a DC voltage;

a drive-signal generation circuit for generating and outputting desired high-voltage-side and low-voltage-side pulse signals by using the DC voltage from said DC-voltage generation circuit; and

a drive control circuit having switching means driven by the pulse signals input from said drive-signal generation circuit to output a drive signal across the output terminals thereof, wherein a resonance circuit and the filament electrodes of a fluorescent lamp light-emitting tube are connected across the output terminals of said switching means, and

said drive-signal generation circuit having:

a timer circuit in which the output signal thereof is altered after a predetermined time from power on;

a separate-excitation oscillator for outputting a signal having a predetermined frequency;

a separate-excitation/self-excitation selection switch circuit for outputting one of two input signals depending on the output signal of said timer circuit;

a trigger input circuit for detecting the resonance frequency of said resonance circuit;

20 a high voltage-side pulse generation circuit having a high-voltage-side dead time generation circuit, a narrow pulse generation circuit, a level shift circuit, a pulse reproduction circuit and an output circuit;

a low-voltage-side pulse generation circuit having a low-voltage-side dead time generation circuit and an output circuit; and

25 an under-voltage lockout circuit for outputting an output signal when the voltage of the power source is a predetermined voltage or less at the time of the rising and falling of the power source.

2. (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus comprising:

a DC-voltage generation circuit for generating a DC voltage;

5 a drive-signal generation circuit for generating and outputting desired high-voltage-side and low-voltage-side pulse signals by using the DC voltage from said DC-voltage generation circuit; and

a drive control circuit having first switching means driven by the high-voltage-side pulse signal input from said drive-signal generation circuit, and second switching means connecting in series therewith and driven by the low-voltage-side pulse signal input from said drive-signal generation circuit, wherein an inductance device, the pair of filament electrodes of the fluorescent lamp light-emitting tube and a first capacitor are connected across both ends of said second switching means, and

said drive-signal generation circuit having:

10 a timer circuit in which the output signal thereof is altered after a predetermined time from power on;

15 a separate-excitation oscillator for outputting a signal having a predetermined frequency;

a separate-excitation/self-excitation selection switch circuit for outputting one of two input signals depending on the output signal of said timer circuit;

20 a1 a trigger input circuit for detecting the resonance frequency of a resonance circuit, wherein said resonance circuit comprises said inductance device and said first capacitor;

a high voltage-side pulse generation circuit having a high-voltage-side dead time generation circuit, a narrow pulse generation circuit, a level shift circuit, a pulse reproduction circuit and an output circuit;

a low-voltage-side pulse generation circuit having a low-voltage-side dead time

25 generation circuit and an output circuit; and

an under-voltage lockout circuit for outputting an output signal when the voltage of the power source is a predetermined voltage or less at the time of the rising and falling of the power source.

8. (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus in accordance with claim 2, wherein said separate-excitation oscillator is configured to output a signal wherein the frequency of the output signal is gradually changed from either the low-frequency range or the high-frequency range of the resonance frequency of the resonance

5 circuit at the time of non-lighting of said light-emitting tube.

11/12. (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a timer circuit configured so that a capacitor, one terminal of which is grounded, is charged with a constant current at the rising of the power source,

and so that when the voltage across the terminals of said capacitor reaches a setting
5 voltage, the output signal is switched, wherein

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a resistor is inserted between one terminal of said capacitor, the other terminal of
which is grounded, and the power source, or between one terminal of said capacitor, the
other terminal of which is grounded, and ground, said separate-excitation oscillator is
configured to output a signal for changing the frequency of lighting from a frequency
10 higher than the resonance frequency of said resonance circuit at the time of non-lighting
of said light-emitting tube to a frequency lower than said resonance frequency.

20, 15 (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus in accordance with
claim 2, further comprising a timer circuit configured so that a capacitor, one terminal of
which is grounded, is charged with a constant current at the rising of the power source,
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and so that when the voltage across the terminals of said capacitor reaches a setting
5 voltage, the output signal is switched, wherein said separate-excitation oscillator is
configured to output a signal having a frequency gradually decreasing from a frequency
higher than the resonance frequency of said resonance circuit at the time of non-lighting
of said light-emitting tube, and then to output a signal having the resonance frequency of
said resonance circuit at the time of lighting of said light-emitting tube.

119, 21. (Once Amended) A fluorescent lamp lighting apparatus in accordance with
claim 9, wherein a capacitor for delaying the input signal of said comparator is connected
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to the input portion of said comparator to attain phase alignment at the time of detecting
the resonance frequency of said resonance circuit.